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CITY WAYS AND COMPANY STREETS

Private Charles Divine

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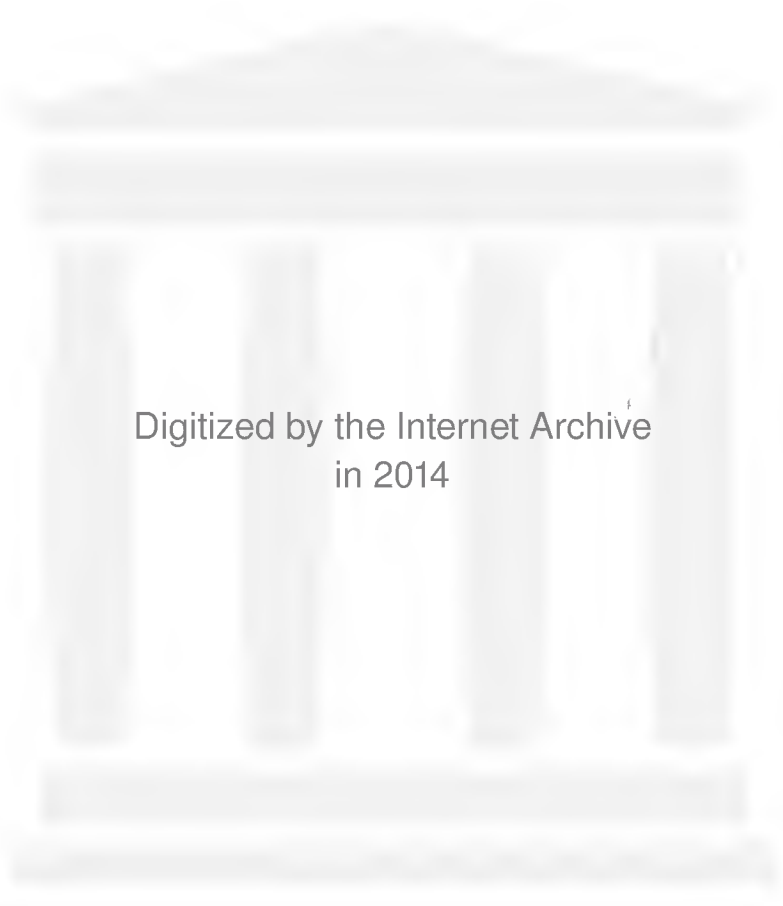
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VOLUME



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CITY WAYS AND COMPANY STREETS



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Private Charles Divino

CITY WAYS AND COMPANY STREETS

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By

PRIVATE CHARLES DIVINE

27th Division, U. S. A.



MOFFAT, YARD & COMPANY

NEW YORK

1918

Copyright, 1918
by
Moffat, Yard & Company
New York

To the Privates who left city ways and went tramping the
company streets;

To the Privates I trudged alongside of: in the 27th (New
York) Division, U.S.A.;

To the Privates so out o' luck that they couldn't go;

To the Privates who will never come back. . . .

In fact — *to all the Privates!*

Acknowledgment is made to the following publications for permission to reprint a number of the poems contained in this volume: The New York Sun, The Smart Set, The Wadsworth Gas Attack and Rio Grande Rattler and Judge.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
AT THE LAVENDER LANTERN	1
ON THE WAY TO SPARTANBURG	2
IN TOWN	4
NIGHT, CAMP WADSWORTH	5
A SONG FOR DARKER DAYS	6
A COOK NAMED ANDY	7
THE ARCADEY OF AN INFANTRYMAN	9
TO SPARTANBURG	10
TO THEE, MY THREE THIN BLANKETS	11
DICKIE DOW, U. S. R.	12
VERSES TO A MULE	15
THE MOONLIGHT SCRUBBERS	17
TO THEE, O BUSY BUGLER	18
THE IMPATIENT SOLDIER	19
SONG OF MARCHING INFANTRY	20
THE THINGS YOU DID IN CIVIL LIFE	21
THE HOB-NAIL SHOES	22
ON THE HIKE	23
TO THY BEAUTY, O MESS KIT	25
EXCITEMENT IN THE BARRACKS	26
OUT O' LUCK	28
SONG OF THANKSGIVING	31
STUCK!	33
S. CLAUS, SUPPLY SERGEANT	35
SONG OF A DAY OUT OF CAMP	36

CONTENTS

	PAGE
OUR SHOW	37
FORMERLY MR. MUGRUMS	38
TO THE DOUGHBOYS	40
"AN AMERICAN PORT"	42
PRIVATE MUGRUMS AT RETREAT	44
WHEN WE COME BACK	46
THE ROAD TO TOWN	47
FROM A BALCONY OF DREAMS	48
REVENGE: IN MEMORY	49
THE STARS IN PAWN	50
COQUETRY AND DEATH	51
LET'S GO DANCING!	52
WHEN LOVE WILL FILL YOUR HEART	53
UNDER THE SAME ROOF	54
WIND IN THE SPRING	55
IN NEW YORK	56
THE HURDY-GURDY PLAYER	57
ON A STRING-PIECE	58
LINES ON A LOAD OF HAY	59
INDECISION	60
I LOST MY PIPE IN MAY	61
YOUNG ROMANCE SOUGHT ADVENTURE	62
A LITTLE WHILE MY HEART CAN SING	63
THE HIDDEN ROAD	64

PREFACE

IT was my misfortune that I never knew Charles Divine until he made his appearance in the office of *The Sun*, New York, some time in 1910, I think. I had just come back on *The Sun* staff after an absence of a year and a half and found a bunch of new men in the little old room devoted to the reporters' typewriters. Among us who used, as Ed Hill once put it, to be herded in there like the lower animals, was this good looking youngster with very black hair and as agreeable a manner as it has ever been my luck to encounter. I knew vaguely that his home was in Binghamton and that he came from Cornell. Everyone liked him.

For a long time—oh, probably a year—Divine was simply a reporter and pleasant company and then we began to hear of and see his verse in the magazines, "filler" poems, bought by editors who had holes to fill and who must have been glad to get stuff of such high quality. I don't mean that the black-haired young man never wrote badly. But when he did, he was under no self-illusion about it. Sometimes he wrote short stories and got them published too.

About this time he went from the West Side Y. M. C. A. to live in Greenwich Village; anyway, he visited Greenwich Village. My own idea is that the sub-title of CITY WAYS AND COMPANY STREETS ought to be *From Greenwich Village to Spartanburg*. The Village, which spoils utterly so

many talents, could not spoil Divine. He saw its poetry and the real wistfulness that underlies the freakish surface. If you don't believe that, read the first poem in this volume *At The Lavender Lantern*. It is as simple and honest and charming a bit of verse as ever came from a poet turned soldier.

Divine was a good reporter and a good fellow. He never had a pretense or an affectation in his life. How was it at Spartanburg with him? Very pleasant—the winter had been rather bad. They had had some hardship—nothing to what the fellows on the other side endured, of course. That was a trim-looking uniform; what did that insignia mean? He explained. It was the mark of a first-class private. And was he a first-class private? Well, no—you see it was this way: The bunch (his squad) had one particular uniform which was kept as a furlough uniform and whenever one of them had a furlough he wore that uniform. . . . He had the grace to blush.

As for the verses in this book it has been a joy to me to publish some of them in that part of *The Sun* in my charge. The greatest thing about them is the absence of hackneyed ideas and worn old phrases which are the sole stock of most camp verse. That is a negative virtue but enormous! On the positive side the reader will delight in the sharp, photographic character of such pieces as *Excitement in the Barracks* and no less in the mystical tinge of *The Moonlight Scrubbers*, where the cheerful jocularly of men at work is so beautifully blended with the loveliness of the Southern night and the sudden, deep, arresting thought and wonder:

“A moment's doubt that guns can kill.”

That has the ring of truth. You see them rubbing away, jesting, and then, for an instant, silent and speculating. . . .

Divine is a real poet. He never tries to write what he hasn't seen or felt. He never poses. He is no rhapsodist. In the sincere work of such as he, in the broadening and deepening of their experience and the increase of their delineative skill, lies the immediate hope of American poetry. England has had great and living verse out of this tragic war; we should have it too. From three thousand miles away, from the farthest flung battle line, it will come to us, celebrating in fit and memorable measures the part we are taking in the effort to save the freedom we have always died for.

GRANT M. OVERTON.

THE SUN Office, New York.

August 15, 1918.

AT THE LAVENDER LANTERN

I wonder who is haunting the little snug café,
That place, half restaurant and home, since we have gone
away;
The candled dimness, smoke and talk, and tables brown
and bare—
But no one thinks of tablecloths when love and laughter's
there.

I wonder if it's crowded still, three steps below the street,
Half hidden from the passing town, where even poets eat;
I wonder if the girls still laugh, the girls whose art was play;
I wonder who the fellows are that try to make them gay.

Some said it was Bohemia, this little haunt we knew,
Where hearts were high and fortunes low, and onions in the
stew,
I wonder if it's still the same, the after dinner ease—
Bohemia is in the heart, and hearts are overseas.

Oh, great were all the problems that we settled there, with
wine,
And fates of many nations were disposed of, after nine,
But France has braved a fate that brought us swarming to
her shore—
I wonder who is sitting at the table near the door.

I wonder who is haunting the little snug café,
That place, half restaurant and home, since we have gone
away;
I wonder if they miss me, I don't suppose they do,
As long as there are art and girls, and onions in the stew.

ON THE WAY TO SPARTANBURG

*(On the occasion of the National Guard parade,
September, 1917.)*

Tramp! Tramp! It's the final view
Of us and you and Fifth Avenue;
Glistening pave and shimmering sun,
And the sheen on our face and the gleam on our gun,
And a song in our hearts as we march away,
Tramp! Tramp! To France some day. . . .

Atten-shun! The guide is right
And the Kaiser wrong in spite of his might,
And we're off to a camp in the sunny South
With a song in our hearts and a kiss on our mouth.
Tramp! Tramp! Give us your smiles,
They're better than teardrops to cover the miles,
And the memory of a radiant face
Is a glorious urge to carry our pace
To France . . . but to S'uth Keer'lina first
To let our conceit and our blisters burst,
And to sharpen our bullets and wits, and go
To render the Kaiser his body blow.

March! For the fever we've all been "stuck,"
And scraped for smallpox, and if we've luck
In the trenches we'll be, when we use our gun,
Inoculated against the Hun.

Head up and chest out! For we're on parade,
Company, regiment, battalion, brigade;
Khaki-clad, and as proud are we
As the lions that guard the "libreree"
Or the girl who waits at a crosstown street
To see if her socks are upon my feet.
Tramp! Tramp! We take the fork
On the road to France. Good-bye, New York!

IN TOWN

Up and down the streets of town,
Up and down go lines of brown,
Khaki figures left and right,
Khaki figures day and night,
Like the tides, they ebb and flow,
Soldiers, soldiers, in a row,
Seeking barbers, baths, and dinner—
In the south you can't grow thinner,
What with biscuits, jams and cakes,
Southern cooks and sunshine bakes.

Up and down, with smart salute,
Soldiers big, and soldiers cute,
Looking lonely, looking spry,
Watching winsome girls go by,
Watching, speechless, with a sigh . . .
Turning to a candy store,
There's a dish with fruits galore,
Cream and choc'late just above;
This they call a "Perfect Love,"
Where else grows, in any clime,
"Perfect Love" for twice a dime?

Roads from camp are ridged with humps,
Up and down the soldier bumps,
Risking life for Morgan Square,
Risking callouses, and there,
Up and down go lines of brown,
Up and down the streets of town.

NIGHT, CAMP WADSWORTH

The Carolina night has splashed the sky
Extravagant with stars and dreams.
The sound of water from a shower bath pavilion
Drips singing through the dark—
A lyric on a wooden floor!

Inside the tent the sleeping bundles stir,
Another soldier, late from town wayfaring,
Prepares his bunk in humming silence.
He grips his Red Cross sweater in his teeth
And pulls it on a parcel for a pillow case—
The sweater knit by some maid in New York.
He wonders if she's dancing there to-night.

He crawls in bed; the tent is dark, yet companionable
With the friendly hum of murm'ring sleepers;
And see! Through little holes burned in the canvas wall,
Where chimney sparks danced down and left their prints,
The moonlight filters magically.
Through each hole shines a gleaming ray
That strikes the farther wall and leaves a star.
What luxury is this! To go to bed
With little stars around your head.

A SONG FOR DARKER DAYS

A nigger, swinging his pick on a road in camp,
Where the sun makes a glistening lane,
Sings from a mouth of contentment
This philosophical strain:

*"I gotta rainbow wrapped aroun' mah shoulder,
Wrapped aroun' mah head.
An' it ain't a-goin' to rain!"*

And there beside the roadway, too,
The soldiers wheel in the golden light,
As straight as the military pine,
In squads left and squads right, and right front into line.
And some are guarding a practice trench,
And some, for a day, five feet in the earth,
But it lacks the grimness of shot and shell,
There's less of death and more of mirth;
It's South Carolina instead of Hell.
And the nigger swinging his sun-bright pick,
Chants to the dirt again:

*"I gotta rainbow wrapped aroun' mah head,
An' it ain't a-goin' to rain!"*

On a later day, in another trench,
When we all go over to No Man's Land
There's a nigger's song with a carefree creed
To be sung where the fighting is hand to hand,
Where the enemy's real and bullets are lead,
In seas of mud on a Flanders plain:

*"I gotta rainbow wrapped aroun' mah head,
An' it ain't a-goin' to rain!"*

A COOK NAMED ANDY

I know a cook named Andy, an' he seldom dresses up;
You see him semi-naked when you come to dine or sup,
A-pourin' out the coffee, or spillin' sweetless tea,
When meat hounds line up where the detail's sweatin' on
K. P.

The guard he comes an' calls the cook—an' then his day
begins;
He stumbles, sleepy, to the shack, an' stirs the pans an' tins;
He cusses when the fire is slow or when the wood won't last
Or when the Dixie gets so hot it burns the oatmeal fast.

But Andy's imperturbable, he knows that he's immune
From mornin' exercises, an' it thrills him with a tune;
No drills to make, no calls to answer—'ceptin' that of pay—
"An' none o' them cosmetics that they do to start the day!"

So Andy's always hummin' lines from *Paddy Murphy's*
Wake,
A-singin' when he's makin' hash or tryin' hard to bake. . . .
"*Another thing they did that night that filled my heart with*
fear,
They took the ice right off the corpse an' put it in the beer!"

The makin' of the pancake is Andy's art, an' there
He takes a sheet iron griddle, about an acre square;
He dances round about it, with flourishes and flips,
An' sends the cakes a-floppin' fast in dizzy spiral dips.

When eggs are fryin' in the pan he keeps a pan ahead,
An' keeps the hungry hash hounds from wishin' he was dead.
Two hundred men are hard to feed, an' worse'n that to
please—

If Andy spoils the stew he opens up a can o' peas!

When Andy gets his day off he can sleep the clock around,
He rides his bunk an' never hears the non-com's awful sound,
"O'Grady says *atten-shun*," or "Hands on shoulders *place!*"
The peace that passeth understandin's, pink on Andy's face.

So Andy's always hummin' lines from *Paddy Murphy's
Wake*.

The ones that take his fancy most are strange beyond
mistake. . . .

*"Another thing they did that night that filled my heart with
fear,*

They took the ice right off the corpse an' put it in the beer!"

THE ARCADY OF AN INFANTRYMAN

I've walked so many winding roads
I love no more the straight.
I want a highway dipped in trees,
A little house, a gate.

A gate to lean upon and look
Back where I came along,
And, dreaming—yes, a little brook
To set my dreams to song.

A gate to watch the sunsets from,
And hear the winds go by,
And breathe the lilacs after rain—
And, possibly, a sigh.

A gate to grip with friendly hands
When stars are overhead,
And feel it move, as if to say:
"You'd better go to bed."

TO SPARTANBURG

O hail! kind host, whose warm heart beats
As Spartan of the nation,
To us who come to swarm your streets
With twice the population.

Invaders we, of quiet ways,
Your dream-lit lanes and mountains.
With you we spend our training days
And pay at soda fountains.

We thank your skies for all their gold,
We crave no nights of zero,
We like your suns, but when it's cold
It's hard to be a hero.

Your misses, soft in speech and eyes,
Your genial, pleasant matrons.
Your cakes and sweet potato pies
And cooks with gleaming aprons.

O hail to thee—though rains may flow
Upon your roads so ruddy—
The sun is bound to shine, and oh!
Your smile is never muddy!

TO THEE, MY THREE THIN BLANKETS

O, when thou came in Summertime, an issue of July,
When all the streets were scorching hot beneath a city sky,
I called thee useless burdens, made to fill up heavy rolls,
To carry hiking over roads, the weight of burning coals.
The purpose: just to shift thy care on shoulders frail but
neat,
And give the sergeants of supply more room to cool their feet.

But when bleak winter southward came and chilled us
through and through,
And snow was on the tent-flap and ice was on the dew,
I called thee useless for the lack of more of thee, so thin,
For more of thee to save myself from freezing to the chin.
I wrapped thee tight about me, I clung to thee like mad,
My love was such that leaving thee at morning made me sad.

Again has come the Springtime, with days so warm and sweet,
And once again I cast thee off, and kick thee with my feet.
I put thee out at morning, to air upon the line,
And then forget to take thee in 'til eight or after nine.
Some day when time hangs heavy, and bunk fatigue's a bore,
I'll send thee faring to a place with "Laundry" on the door;
Some day when bunk fatigue's a bore, I'll have thee washed
so bright—
But oh, somehow that day is just beyond to-morrow night!

DICKIE DOW, U. S. R.

He swings his arms from the elbow, as a smart young
officer should;
He marches erect, with an air of pride, that does my old
heart good.
He's First Lieutenant Dowlington, whom I used to call
Dickie Dow,
And I, who bossed him at college, am only a private now.

For some of us have to be officers, and some of us have to
be men,
And I mind what he says when he tells me, though he used
to mind me then.

A freshman was Dickie, a junior was I, fraternity brothers,
too,
And he was as green and timid a "fresh" as ever walked into
the "U."
I made him weather his college storms, I helped him over
the year,
And his frivolous mother scribbled her thanks: "He's such
a baby, the dear!"

When we woke to the war and its mission, I went by the
shortest way
And joined the Guard, and that's why, you see, I'm here
in the ranks to-day.
But Dickie—and I mustn't blame him—he went to an
officers' school,
And came out with a bar on his shoulder and the latest
bayonet rule.

How I used to shout at him, "Dickie Dow!" whenever we
 chanced to meet;
Now, sir, it's "Lieutenant Dowlington" the length of the
 company street,
For some of us have to be officers, and some of us try to be
 men,
And I mind what he says when he tells me, though he used
 to mind me then.

So I do my bit, digging a pit, back of the old latrine,
While Dickie looks on with his head erect, though once
 with a troubled mien
He gripped my arm, and he looked away: "It ought to be
 me instead."
But I laughed at him softly and sent him away with a
 friendly shake of the head.

For he swings his arms from the elbow, as a smart young
 officer should,
And he marches erect, with an air of pride, that does my
 old heart good.

Later—the scene was the trenches—when we all landed
 "over there,"
I stepped in the way of a bullet that crumpled me up for
 fair.
The enemy pushed us and trampled, as I lay there waiting
 for death,
When I felt an arm underneath me and Dickie Dow's
 gasping breath.
"Now steady, old pal, and we'll make it," lifting me, that's
 what he said,
"Good God!" there were tears in his boyish eyes: "It ought
 to be me instead."

He carried me back through the shell-fire, the hell-fire, the
shrapnel, the rain,
To a doctor he browbeat with orders, and that's why I'm
living again.
Then, going back to his station, a shell burst right at his feet,
And Dickie lay dead—and still were the arms that had
swung so smart and neat,
Still were the lips that had murmured: "It ought to be me
instead,"
Still were the brave young shoulders that held so erect a
head.
Though I bossed him once, and he minded me, the dear
little Dickie Dow,
I'd take the kitchen detail in hell—if I could be serving
him now!

VERSES TO A MULE

I'd like to sing the virtues of a mule, brown, black, or gray;
To paint his personality in quite a pleasing way,
But Jim declares a mule's beneath such eloquent respect,
And, saying which, his diction's more emphatic than correct.

A mule-skinner is Jim, and you ought to see him drive:
The wheelers balk and, statue-like, they scarcely seem alive;
The leaders semi-circle 'til they prance at Jimmy's feet,
And Jimmy leaps politely up to tender them his seat.

A mule is nothing beautiful; no hymn or work of art.
It's Jim's belief he's only ears and hoofs, without a heart,
Unkempt, a shaggy animal, who shies at every shack,
Who always waits his chance and kicks you just below the
back.

Now, only beasts can sweat, they say, for gentlemen perspire,
But bless the tugging mules that pull your auto from the
mire.

'Tis true, by conscience they object to backing where they
stand—

That's not a vicious habit in a military land.

Oh, he's the brute who lugs your heavy rations to the door,
The brute who labors, hauling, from the quartermaster's
store,

The one who stumbles through the mud and always finds
his feet,

With loads of hay and wood and coal and clothing, bread,
and meat.

He looks at you as if his soul lay sleeping in his eyes,
He plods the roads as if the world for him held no surprise,
He pulls the combat wagons over ruts as high as trees,
He wallows where the others shrink and dirties up his knees.

So talk to him more gently, Jim, this homely beast of toil,
For he's the only one can swim through Carolina soil;
And tuck him safe in bed at night and kiss him on the
cheek—
And maybe, then, he'll never kick you—more than once a
week.

THE MOONLIGHT SCRUBBERS

Far down the vistaed, tent-lined street,
From Blue Ridge Mountains pours the sweet,
Night-kissed bouquet of oak and pine
That stings the head like potent wine.
Here soldiers sit bent over tubs
And wash their clothes with rhythmic rubs.
Through leaves, white tipped, each open space
Floods moonlight; patterned songs and lace;
A silver bush on moon-sprayed ground
Breathes music sweeter than a sound.
Where beauty is are loves, desires,
Night's vague and vibrant softness fires;
Adventures brighten in the South
Where romance calls from full-lipped mouth—
And see! the lifted arms hang still,
A moment's doubt that guns can kill.
Then scrubbing hands forget the night:
"Who's got the soap? The grease sticks tight!"

TO THEE, O BUSY BUGLER

O thou, whose lungs seem just as metal bound
As that weird horn from which your awful sound
Bursts forth at dawn; O thou, barbaric lad,
A heathen player now in khaki clad,
What makes you so devoted to a horn
That crashes through sweet slumbers every morn?

Why don't you choose some softer reed to play,
Some dim Hawaiian strings for reveille,
The which, instead of rousing, like a pain,
Would lull the dreaming men to sleep again?
Almost 'twould be preferred to hear you sing,
Than let reverberate that awful thing.

Regardless of the weather, fair or damp,
How oft you call us forth throughout the camp.
Your puckered lip, your straining face,
All eager when you hold the horn in place.
What zeal is this? What misspent pride you take,
As if you breathed your plaints for music's sake!

Just when we hoped your call would softly speak
You end, alas, upon a skyward squeak.
But cruelest of all, with brutal might,
Are you: a novice practicing at night.
'Tis then I think your notes, your mind and will,
Are bent on stirring men with lust to kill.

THE IMPATIENT SOLDIER

"A soldier has been defined as a man who has an insatiable desire to go anywhere else."—MAJOR GENERAL O'RYAN.

Something calls—and I want to go over.

I want to go over where comrades have led:
From these white cotton-fields and the sweet-smelling clover
To roads where the flowers of battle are red.

Here, friendly highways companion your noontide,
Sunshine a-spatter on still, forest lanes,
Fields hushed in beauty when night floods the June-tide—
And ponchos and shelter whenever it rains.

There, roads are shattered and young lads around them,
Bullets will spatter instead of the sun,
And up from the byways limp those who have found them
And back from the highways the ghosts of men run.

Yet I want to go over—a soldier's impatient;
This horrible vise is a heart leaping hot,
Regardless of fate or the shell-hole adjacent,
And trying to get there until he is "got."

His nature would baffle court martial or jury;
A-roving, a-yearning, go somewhere he must.
God fashioned him out of a glorious fury,
A handful of dust . . . and the wanderlust.

Something calls—yes, I smell every cluster of clover,
I see here the meadows, each blossom is gay . . .
And the song of the wind—but I want to go over.
It calls, and I want to go over to-day!

SONG OF MARCHING INFANTRY

Some day you'll get an order, and it's bound to bring delight,
When you take the road to somewhere and the end is not in
sight;

A hundred twenty footsteps in a minute's rhythmic walk,
And marching at attention, boys, you aren't allowed to talk,
But your feet will beat a marching song, a-swinging smart
and spright;

Oh, put it down and pick it up, left—foot—right!

Your guns will catch the sunlight and your feet will catch
the tune,

And your blood will be a-singing when the sun climbs up to
noon.

Now the guide has got the cadence, and the boys have got
the step,

And they're marching to a road-song that goes "hep! hep!
hep!"

And though your feet be weary when the column halts at
night,

Oh, put it down and pick it up, left—foot—right!

Oh, canteens full of water when you're going on a hike;
The thought of it's a comfort, and the wetness you will like;
Oh, fill 'em up, and fill 'em up, but don't you drink a drop,
For the man who drinks upon the march will be the first to
flop.

Your haversack is heavy, but your heart is always light,

Oh, put it down and pick it up, left—foot—right!

THE THINGS YOU DID IN CIVIL LIFE

In civil life you had it soft—
I've heard you say it fifty times.
You made a hundred bucks a week
And let the others chase the dimes.

Besides, you got to work at ten,
But here you're treated like the rest,
You have to work like other men—
And you who used to get the best!

You might have owned the business now
If you had stayed, that's what you say,
Because the boss had no one else
To handle girls in just your way.

The president would often come
To you for tips on what to do,
But here nobody seeks your help,
Except for seconds on the stew.

Oh, yes, your fame was growing fast,
Your car was always at the door,
Your face was noticed on the street,
Before you came to end the war.

But now, dear fool, lay off that stuff,
Forget the bunk and buckle down.
"The things you did in civil life"
May sound all right back there in town.

You're here to fight and not to cry,
So when you've won this strafing strife
You then can go and boast about
The things you did in army life!

THE HOB-NAIL SHOES

Oh, you can take the high road, and others take the low,
And you will be in Scotland, France, or anywhere you go
Oh, many moons afore 'em, lads; the roads will crumble
fast—

Or you can sail your shoes as ships, and you can be the mast.

An army travels on its feet—Napoleon was wrong;
The hob-nails would have cut the road from Moscow half
as long,

For when you strike a rutty plain, as doughboys sometimes
must,

You'll leave behind macadam where you pounded through
the dust.

So, plant your feet with thunder and a philosophic trust
That when you lift your shoes again your legs won't crack
or bust.

An ugly lump o' leather, over hilly ways you'll plod,
So put your feet in hob-nail shoes and place your faith in
God.

And when you leap across the top, through battle-smoke or
haze,

The Boche will see an armored tank upon each foot you
raise.

They'll run in fear—and those who stay, the stunned among
your foes,

They'll lose their guns and gumption if you step upon their
toes.

Oh, thirty-seven hob-nails in the sole of every shoe.

Oh, thirty-seven hob-nails, boys—or is it forty-two?

A-stamping stars for footprints in the roads that you pass by,
And some day you will stamp the stars—well, maybe, on
the sky!

ON THE HIKE

A strange road, an open road, by hedges or by fills,
A sunlit wave of gleaming guns that climbs the rolling hills;
The unknown windings, sudden turnings, houses shining
white—

"I like 'em all," says Private Pease; "it helps the appetite."

"Forward!" says the Major, a-riding on his horse.

"March!" says the Major, who doesn't walk of course.

The faded, dusty leggings flashing white across the ground,
In even rows the column goes; there's scarcely any sound
Except the tramp . . . tramp . . . tramp . . . of feet
upon the dust,

The road that leads where censor's scissors never gather rust.

"It's strange," says Private Pease, the while his hob-
nailed gunboats thump,

"I joined the standing army but I'm always on the
jump."

Perhaps you know the shelling of a great infernal fire,
But did you ever see us hike through sandy roads or mire?

The sun is burning hot above and frying eggs below,
And Private Pease suspects a growing blister on his toe.

"Route step!" says the Major. "Hell!" says Private
Pease,

"I'd like to see the Kaiser do it on his hands and knees."

Unhook your sling, and swing your rifle up against your
back,
And, marching at the route step, lads, we all can take a
whack
At singing of the songs we've heard and some we never
knew,
But keep your gun from worrying the fellow back of you.
"Battalion, halt!" the Major says, "fall out now, men,
and rest."
"And that command," says Private Pease, "I execute
the best."

TO THY BEAUTY, O MESS KIT

O Kit, I gaze on thee three times a day
And watch thee catch each sunbeam's gleaming ray.
With what fond care and soap do I adorn
Thy shining cheeks against Inspection morn.
O Kit, thy face hath made me feel ensouled,
Thy glist'ning brightness promised feasts untold
When, seizing thee as bugles called to mess,
I hugged thee with a passionate caress.
A-tiptoe, double-timing, have I run
Bareheaded, eager, through the wind and sun
To reach that hall where thou could'st best be served
Receiving sweets thy radiant sheen deserved.
And there, heart-high, I hold thee open wide
And see, alas, oh, with what woe betide,
Thee heaped with this disguised, synthetic brew
Which on analysis discloses stew.

EXCITEMENT IN THE BARRACKS

There's excitement in the barracks, a frantic group at night,
They are hunching close together on the floor beneath the
light;

Between the even rows of cots they squat on hand and knee,
And beat the beaver boards with high barbaric cries of glee.

The shirtless bodies strain, intense, and elbow through the
crowd;

The voices sound belligerent, they talk of "shooting" loud;
There's rhythm to the tumult, refrains are lifted hot.

You think it's full of fighting, murder, sudden death?
It's not!

A nickel he's wrong, a nickel he's right.

Shoot a dime. Get out o' the light.

Roll the bones. A nickel he's wrong—

That's the theme of the turbulent song!

There's tiny Private Higginson, who's stripped down to
the belt,

But wears his hat of steel, for "getting used to how it felt";
"I ought to be a-writin' home," he says, and throws the dice,
And knows his widowed mother wouldn't think it very nice.

There's Purdy, bullying the bones and pleading as they go;
He calls on Little Phoebe, by name, Big Dick and Little Joe.
Somebody hints the cubes are stacked and slid across the
floor—

A tin cup for the shaking now, and rattle them before.

*Five's the point. Get in line.
An' there's a seven. The dice are mine.
Shoot two bits. I'm fadin' you.
Look out, a natural's comin' through.
Can you make it? His point's a ten.
A quarter he don't—he did it again!
I got a half that says he's wrong—
That's the theme of the turbulent song!*

The circle's pressing closer fast, "lights out" will soon be
blown,

On bended knee the nervous Purdy begs each rolling bone;
And tiny Private Higginson, his letter home unsent,
(Tomorrow writes a money order bigger than the rent).

And some have risked their fortunes, the way they'll risk
their necks:

A single throw, and poverty! an oath, which laughter
checks.

A bugle blows "attention," the lights go out at ten,
And darkness floods the barracks where excitement gripped
the men.

*A nickel he's wrong, a nickel he's right.
Shoot a dime. They'll be dousin' the light.
Roll the bones. A nickel he's wrong—
That's the theme of the turbulent song!*

OUT O' LUCK

He came to camp with the rest of us, singing like you and
me,
And Bobby was good to look at, and Bobby was gay with
glee;
His father was rich and famous, but Bob never minded that,
And beside me he bunked on an army cot, who had a Fifth
avenue flat.

Bob had a favorite comment when anything went amiss,
"I'm out of luck," he'd say and smile, and his smile was like
a kiss.
He was out of luck when the mess was late, or his letter
overdue,
He was out of luck, he'd even say, at no seconds on the stew.

One day he showed me her picture, the beautiful Evelyn
Gray;
Though speechless he stood in worship, I knew she was
his fiancée,
And I knew I had seen her likeness in the Sunday paper of
old,
And I knew when he pounced on the mail man, her letter
was better than gold.

When we landed in France and the trenches and the guns
broke loud on our ears,
It was Bobbie who bore up the brightest, and Bobbie who
laughed at all fears;
Oh, Bobbie was good to pal with, and Bobbie was gay
with glee,
Who came to camp with the rest of us, singing like you and
me.

One night when the winds were shrieking and the shells
were doing the same,
The lieutenant called for a night patrol, and Bobbie, he
said he was game,
Though he needn't have said it to prove the fact—but
another was picked instead,
And Bobbie complained: "I'm out o' luck," and crawled
back through mud to his bed.

At half-past three we met an attack; they thought it would
be a surprise,
But our bayonets proved their worth in steel and our boys
their courage in size;
We suffered no loss, it seemed at first, 'til I found him after
awhile,
And found, when I looked into his face, it was Bobbie—
without his smile.

He fumbled somewhere in his gaping breast, while his
mouth twitched wide with pain,
And he drew out the picture of Evelyn Gray, and his eyes
were bright again.
"It's hell!" he gasped, and the picture shook, "It's hell to
leave her like this,
To know I shall never see her again—Thank God! I re-
member her kiss.

"She would have been mine, I fancy—" he choked, but
went on somehow—
"Drop her a line, old pal, and say that I—I won't be writing
her now."
He rambled: "That letter on Thursday . . the noise in
my head . . what say?"
My eyes were wet and my heart beat loud when he cried:
"It's Thursday to-day!"

His voice died away in a whisper, the light died out in his
eye,
But he uttered a phrase I'll remember, and remember the
day I die.
It's the bravest philosophy of all, it's the best in the mire
and muck,
It also happened to be his last: "I guess that I'm out o' luck."

SONG OF THANKSGIVING

For cotton fields that neighbor us,
For Carolina's skies of blue,
We raise up thanks, and also for
A turkey feast instead of stew.
For British pluck across the seas,
For deeds of all the gallant French,
We thank the Kaiser's God that now
We are companions in a trench.

And thanks for rumors filling camp
That, written home, give writer's cramp:
The Huns sing Tipperary now,
The Major says we march the best,
I hear we're leaving anyhow
For some place—I forgot the rest,
But you know me, I get 'em right;
I heard the rumor just to-night.

They plan to discontinue mess,
So we can get more time for drill;
I got it straight from Sergeant Hess,
Who heard it from his brother Bill,
We're going home. We're off to France.
They're going to issue woolen pants.

The Kaiser's joined the Democrats,
We all get furloughs in a day,
Enamel bath-tubs, Turkish mats,
I overheard the Captain say.
To-morrow noon we all get paid,
And cotton breeches never fade.

They say the Colonel may decide
Postponing reveille 'til ten,
And when we reach the other side,
They'll serve champagne to all the men!
You'll never have to clean your gun,
The Government will have it done.

For rumors, dreams, and skies of blue,
Oh, raise up thanks that some are true!

STUCK!

Tramp! Tramp! Tramp! The soldiers on parade.
How smart they swung along the road in checkered sun and
shade:

The gleaming guns, the shining boots, the lively steps, the
neat salutes—

Tramp! Tramp! Tramp! The soldiers on parade.

Squish! Squish! Squish! The roads are full of mud.
How smart the soldiers stagger where they once were wont
to thud,

To music made of slushy ooze, as suction grips the plastered
shoes—

Squish! Squish! Squish! The soldiers in the mud.

Mud, mud, mud,
O undelicious brew of earth and sky.
Mud, mud, mud,
Part coffee, pudding, stew, and pie,
Served to Carolina hills.
So adhesive are you, mud of camp,
That even this poem has at last become mired.
It limps, a prisoner in your glucose grip.
Its feet are stuck,
Nor all the King's horses,
Nor all the General's mule skinnners
Can pull them back again.

Soldiers wallow to the knees, wagons sink to the hubs;
O mud, it is with thou that
The River Styx must flow!
Mud in the company street, mud in the tent,
Mud in the mess tins, and mud on your blankets,
Mud in the wash basin,
Which you hang up on the stove to dry by night,
In order that you may brush it out
In the morning with a whiskbroom.
After you, O mud, the fields of France
Will seem Arcadian.
O mud, sixteen weeks of intensive mud.
One cannot think of you long
Without cussing,
O mud,
Mud,
MUD.

S. CLAUS, SUPPLY SERGEANT

He may not have a soldier's build
 Around his waist or belly,
But he can serve his nation with
 His boxes, cakes, and jelly.
The uniform he wears is not
 Exactly regulation,
But he knows how to run the guards
 Into the reservation.

His cheeks are red, his twinkling eyes
 See roads, though flat or hilly,
And he will reach the Sunny South
 On breezes warm or chilly.
Our chimney-tops may bar his way,
 What with their spark arresters,
But he will fill your socks with things
 From Bessies, Janes, and Esthers,
From Aunt Annette, the Colonel's wife,
 The Captain's niece or sister,
The girl back home who laughed and cried
 The day you left—and kissed her.

His reindeers only prance at night,
 Invisible, these friskers,
But you can see his heart behind
 His camouflage of whiskers!

SONG OF A DAY OUT OF CAMP

This is a careless, vagabond song,
This is a song of the red, red roads,
Cotton fields, soldiers, a swinging stride,
Holiday jaunts with the music of odes.

This is a song of wind from the hills,
This is a song of the sun in the sky,
Roadways that wander, get lost, return,
Jitneys that splutter and flutter by.

This is a song to fill the air,
This is a song to fool the ear,
This is a song to fill up space,
This is the space it fills right here!

OUR SHOW

We can't all visit Broadway
And wander up and down
Where Ziegfeld makes the Follies,
And follies make the town.
We cannot see the Astor,
The Lyric's tuneful play—
We left the gay-lamped turnpike
One ancient, autumn day.

So, Broadway comes to meet us,
We brought it here tonight,
With song and dance and laughter,
And girls from left to right,
And quips and words and music,
And beauty, like as not,
And costumes quite expensive,
And probably a plot.

We see the soldiers kicking
Across the footlight's glow
A dainty, un-flatfooted,
Light, fantastic toe.
We hear the tunes they'll whistle
Where crowds are pouring in,
The tunes we'll all be humming
On the highway to Berlin.

And when we leave the showhouse,
With its rouged and roguish vamp,
We'll think in terms of taxis
Though we're bumping back to camp.

FORMERLY MR. MUGRUMS

Oh, thirty thousand pals o' mine are startin' overseas,
An' thirty thousand strangers are arrivin' by degrees.
The camp is changin' hands an' gettin' lonesomer each day,
An' still my outfit's left behind while others tramp away.

I'm one-two-two-three-four-three-four, the number's every-
where,
It's stamped upon my roll an' belt, an' maybe on my hair,
It's printed on my barracks bag, it's painted on my heart,
An' I'm a-waitin' orders now to pull up stakes an' start.

There's nothin' half so dismal as a fellow left behind,
Behind in camp a-waitin', an' the waitin's quite a grind,
When all his restless buddies have departed, like as not,
A-boundin' on the main, while he's a-tossin' on his cot.

An' I who once was Mr. Mugrums, long before the war,
Am only known, alas, as 1 2 2 3 4 3 4.
I'm just a stenciled number, on the tag around my neck,
To help the litter bearers guessin' who's the human wreck!

For days I've been inspected from my haircut to my toes,
From russet shoes to breeches, wool, all regulation clothes;
Blankets, three; and tent pins, five; and leggings, canvas,
two—

I'll wear 'em out exposin' 'em so many times to view!

The troop train's on the sidin', an' the engine's belchin' steam,
Far down the road a column comes, a-marchin' like a dream.
The cook leans from the baggage car, his range is smokin'
some,
He's got a mess a-stewin' an' the chances are it's slum.

An' I, who once was Mr. Mugrums, long before the war,
I get a thrill at bein' 1 2 2 3 4 3 4.
I think the stenciled number's like a medal on my neck,
Although it may identify, some day, a human wreck.

The troops are marchin' through the dust, toward the shinin'
tracks,
Their guns are on their shoulders, an' their packs are on their
backs.
There ain't no song they're singin' now—a strangely silent
crew,
They're thinkin' an' they're smilin' an' they're wond'rin' if
it's true.

There's "section twenty, fifty men," it's chalked upon a car,
Like one I'll take some happy day—I'll never know how far,
For dopin' out an army move's a super-soldier task,
You never know until you're there, an' then you have to ask.

An' I, who once was Mr. Mugrums, long before the war,
I'm full o' thrills at bein' 1 2 2 3 4 3 4.
The little metal tag is like a medal on my neck,
Although it may identify, some day, a human wreck.

TO THE DOUGHBOYS

They told me—the tempters—'twas safer
To juggle receipts on my knee,
Right should'rin' a pen, in this war o' men,
At home with the Q. M. C.

It whispered—a voice o' the Devil's—
You're makin' the fight jes' the same,
Gettin' writer's cramp in a U. S. camp—
An' it never can cripple or lame.

So I stayed (an' I scorned high adventure);
I'm six feet tall an' I'm strong;
An' ships of each sort sailed out o' the port,
An' I knew all the while I was wrong.

I knew it, this voice o' the Devil's;
It promised home-comin's agen—
The folks ne'er a doubt, put a service flag out—
Oh, the Devil-o'-Faint-Hearted-Men!

An' finally, thinkin' an' thinkin',
An' watchin' the doughboys pass,
The gleam o' the sun on the steel o' the gun,
An' columns o' fours in mass;

A-steppin' so brave and so smart like,
Swingin' on down to the dock,
A-totin' their packs, an' rolls on their backs,
A-grippin' each gun by the stock.

How their faces shone, an' with reason,
Each lad with his head held high,
An' it gave me a start, for I felt in my heart
I was lettin' the heroes go by.

The lads who will leap into manhood
The minute the firin' begins,
The lads who will fight, on their bellies at night,
An' sing through the loudest o' dins.

The doughboys, God bless 'em, swung past me;
I watched, an' God! how it hurt!
I could handle, I knew, a German or two,
An' knock him right out o' his shirt.

An' there, with his load of equipment,
As the marchin' battalions went by,
There was more than one little son-of-a-gun
Who measured but five feet high.

They're heroes, the grand little doughboys,
Each giant an' sunburnt runt.
So many will fall the world won't recall,
An' they'll all go up to the front!

They're heroes in hundreds o' thousands,
The infantrymen of today;
An' it's fine to know that they wanted to go,
An' I'm goin'—thank God—that way.

I watched 'em troop into the transports,
I watched, an' I saw an' I knew . . .
An' at last I'm one; take a look at my gun—
My transfer has jes' gone through!

“AN AMERICAN PORT”

From a window in the barracks room you see the glist'nin'
bay,

You lie upon your army cot and watch the ships go through,
You see 'em when the dawn is red an' when you hit the hay,
An' in your dreams you see 'em—'til the transport comes
for you!

Meanwhile, you wait an' get inspected, wait some more an'
then

You get tin hats, trench coats, an' duds the country must
supply,
You turn your old clothes in for new, you're dressed like
gentlemen—

An' then you sit upon the shore an' watch the ships go by.

The biplanes buzz above the harbor, brothers to the gulls,
The motor boats, a-phut, phut, phuttin', skitter to an' fro;
The freighters lift their painted arms, with stripes along their
hulls,

The zebra-tinted steamers creep to seaward very slow.

The schooners loaf with lazy sails, as if they stood at ease,
The soldiers lounge along the beach, a-watchin' 'til it's
night—

They say the ships are coalin' for a journey overseas—
A-watchin' 'til the darkness pricks the winkin' headland
light.

The clumsy ferryboat that crawls, an ugly bug by day,
Becomes at dusk a diamond palace floatin' over glass,
There's crowdin' on the shingle down the moon lane to the
bay,
An' soldiers strummin' banjos as they watch the steamers
pass.

You line up in the mornin'—Inspectors comin'!—Damn!
At throat inspection officers look down your gullet deep.
(Oh, hide the clothes that's not an issue from your Uncle
Sam).
The officers look in your eyes as if they knew a heap.

They march you to the mess hall. "Take your shoes off
now!" they ask.

You sit upon the table with your toes upon the seat;
The officer, he comes along with gloves, but not a mask,
An' grabs an' twists an' estimates the value of your feet.

There's sentries all around the camp—they call it
quarantine—

You can't get out beyond the guards: wild women or the
town;
It's safe, this embarkation camp, it's safe from submarine,
An' so you dawdle on the beach where ships go up and
down.

From a window in the barrack rooms you see the glist'nin'
bay.

You lie upon your army cot an' watch the ships go through,
You see 'em when the dawn is red an' when you hit the hay,
An' in your dreams you see 'em—'til the transport comes
for you.

PRIVATE MUGRUMS AT RETREAT

Retreat's the time I'm freshly shaved, an' washed behind
the ears,
I've buttoned all my pockets, an' tried to hide my fears;
But if my shoes are muddy, then my heart sinks in my shirt—
I've got a Looie who can spot the microscopic dirt.

It's "Back a little, Mugrums . . . Your head is in the way.
I've no desire to see your face—I see it every day.
Come up there in the centre," with a military grunt:
"Now, carry it along the line. Steady, steady . . . Front!"

It's "Mugrums, was your razor dull?" An' then he grabs
my gun.
"I think I see a little rust." He holds it to the sun.
He squints along the rifle bore, an' then he squints at me;
Retreat's a social fete, with discipline instead o' tea.

The silent company's at ease, each fellow in his place,
An' thoughts are workin' underneath that never reach the
face,
A-thinkin' how to-day's mistakes to-morrow may redeem,
An' how you'll do some sewin' where your breeches burst a
seam.

The windjammers are buglin' now. "Pa-rade rest!" An'
then
The band takes up the tune that's sacrest to all the men.
Your heels, they click attention, your blood leaps fast an' red;
The pride runs up your spinal cord and tingles in your
head. . . .

One night the Looie, dignified, stood out in front, at ease,
As if the world through him were safe an' half the seven seas,
When lo! the Colonel, watchin', sent the most unkindest cut:
"Present my compliments to him . . . and say: tuck in your
gut!"

The Looie stiffened like a shot, an' straight from chin to feet,
An' since I saw him suffer that I'm fonder of retreat.
I like the ceremony, it's a tribute to the flag,
An' I can take a bawlin' out, with "Yes, sir," like a brag.

*It's "Back a little Mugrums. . . . Your head is in the way.
I've no desire to see your face—I see it every day.
Come up there in the centre." With a military grunt:
"Now carry it along the line. Steady, Steady. . . . Front!"*

WHEN WE COME BACK

When we come back, remember . . . the things we planned
to do:

The little house upon the hill with room enough for two,
The casement with the ivy, the grass so soft and deep,
The singing roof where drops of rain would lull the night to
sleep.

You said you'd hold me tight and never let me go again,
You'd kiss each scar upon my face, and every mark of pain;
When we come back, remember—you laughed when it was
said—

I might be out an arm, but you would hug me twice instead.

I'll know you will have suffered far more than even I,
I'll know the sleepless nights when you could only walk and
cry.

Remember, proud of heart, dear, if I should chance to fall,
You'd rather I had not come back, than never go at all.

Remember all the nonsense we said we'd talk at night
When, leaning on the swinging gate, we'd watch the stars in
flight;

And don't forget the roses, the tinkling, leafy brook,
And how—you did, you know it—you said you'd learn to
cook.

When we come back, remember . . . the things we planned
to do;

The little house upon the hill with room enough for two,
The casement with the ivy, the road a winding track,
The little house upon the hill, and . . . and—when we come
back!

THE ROAD TO TOWN

The road to town is young with Spring,
And brave with new green grasses,
And how my heart goes venturing
With every lad that passes.

For here my lover left so gay,
And on his lips was laughter,
But I—I turned my head away,
I couldn't follow after.

Though, gypsy heart to gypsy heart,
I've shared his every by-way,
His roads and kisses—oh! to part
On such a golden highway!

But now he's gone the road to town—
Oh, God! the lilac's blooming!—
And from the town the ships go down
To where the guns are booming.

The road to town is young with Spring,
And green with new green grasses;
Oh, lad, my heart goes venturing
With each of you that passes.

FROM A BALCONY OF DREAMS

Oh, whence do you come, reluctant, white maid?

From the crescent-lit distance, the drift o' the moon.
But why so adventurous, yet so afraid?

The moon-days are dim when the dawn is so soon.

Then why wander love-roads and vanish again?

Oh, that is my mystery, mischief, and grace——
For the torment of women, and youth's sudden pain
That sees in another my own fairy face!

REVENGE: IN MEMORY

Far down the twilight-haunted way
Where ghosts and love-dreams intertwine,
Your arm in his, for all 'tis May,
Is not so close as heart of mine
Still throbbing from your lips that day
With one mad kiss like stolen wine.

THE STARS IN PAWN

Those gems, the stars of summer night,
Some reckless god hung up to pawn
In Heaven, when his purse was light,
To tide him over 'til the dawn,
While, riotous, he came to earth.
To wander, singing, up and down
The winding streets, and in his mirth
He lost the tickets in the town.

COQUETRY AND DEATH

I want to kiss your chill, white lips, O Death;
Deep in your dusky arms to lie awhile,
And, lover-wise, to lean upon your breath
And feel the dreaming movement of your smile.

But not to stay with you—a moment's span
With finger-tips to touch your brow above
Would be enough to teach me, if you can
Surpass the sweetness of my living love.

LET'S GO DANCING!

Let's go dancing, you and I,
Far away from town,
Out beneath October's sky,
Columbine and clown;
Autumn leaves are mad and spry,
Dancing, let us dare defy
Etiquette of town.

Where no restaurants are nigh—
Not a satin gown,
Linen collar or a tie,
As they do in town—
Out beneath October's sky,
There's no one to lift an eye
If your hair comes down.

WHEN LOVE WILL FILL YOUR HEART

O, I was singing, fancy free,
A song that shook my house's side,
Until to give it liberty,
I flung a window open wide.

The wind, so highway-wise and smart,
Blew in and left this little line:
"Some day, when love will fill your heart,
You'll sing a song as big as mine."

UNDER THE SAME ROOF

To-night we are together, you and I,
For what are walls and houses, Love,
Or streets and towns that lie between us,
But material things of a trained fool's building?
The night is soft with dreams,
And I am strong with courage.
I dare to feel your arms about my neck,
Under the selfsame roof of sky and wall of stars.
The same breeze that blows in your window,
Touching your lips and playing with your hair,
Comes to me with kisses and soft fingers.
To-night we are together, you and I.

WIND IN THE SPRING

For there she walked, her dress like gold,
That lit the winding, singing streets;
And Spring, new blossoms for the old,
Comes back to torture me with sweets.

To lead me down a scented way,
With wind-dipped fingers soft as this—
Oh, Spring, you've caught her very breath,
And memorized her gypsy kiss!

IN NEW YORK

June, and a street winding to the river:
I wandered down and June walked up to meet me
With sunlight and zephyrs
Abducting the sweets of a garden close.
Conjuring visions of roses and tulips and daffodils,
But especially roses.
Suddenly a placard before me on a loft factory:
"*Rosemakers Wanted, Apply Borgonzi & Einstein, Third*
Floor."
And I asked myself:
"Has God gone out of the business?"

THE HURDY-GURDY PLAYER

I envy the player of a hurdy-gurdy
Who came into my street this noon.
He made a holiday for children's feet
And lightened up a shop-girl's face
With a tune that took her far away
To some imagined eight-hour Arcady.
He could not watch all of his listeners
Who leaned from windows when his back was turned,
And so, in a grimy hand he held a mirror cupped
To glimpse over his shoulder those that heard.
And then he wheeled upon the windowed audience
So suddenly that furtive tenants, caught ashamed,
Were forced to throw him pennies.
I wish that when I sing
I, too, might hold a mirror up
To look behind
And see how many fools are laughing!

ON A STRING-PIECE

I can hear a tramp a-coalin' an' the winches' raspin' song,
Though I only see a tugboat at the dock;
An' I almost feel the rollin' o' the seas a-runnin' strong,
An' my heart it gits a sudden kind o' shock.
Ain't ye cute, ye little tug, dancin' like a water-bug
Up and down the Hudson River where I once put out to
sea?

Though my sailin' days are over, an' it's hard to git to Dover,
Yet I hear a tramp a-coalin', an' she sounds a call to me!

I recalls the mate was crazy, an' the bosun had a knife
In the fight by swingin' lamps when homeward bound;
Then I thought that I was lucky gittin' out with just my life;
Now I miss the bosun's cursin' an' its sound.

Ain't ye cute, ye little tug, dancin' like a water-bug?
Ye reminds me o' the sea-wind an' the madness o' the fight.
Though my sailin' days are over, an' its hard to git to Dover,
Yet I hear a tramp a-coalin', an' I'm goin' 'board to-night!

LINES ON A LOAD OF HAY

There passed along the canyoned city street a load of hay.
I stopped. The wind was from the South.
It touched the rigging's mound and brought to me
The scent of those so far forgotten days
Of last year's Summer—keenly redolent
Of the broad fields and the beating sun,
The click and the whirl and the singing hum
Of the mowing machine, and the flashing tines
Of the lifted forks in the windrow lines
As the hay was rolled into shining cocks.

The driver, leather-capped and grave, stopped his horses.
I seized a wisp of the trailing hay and thrust it to my nose
As if it were an amorous glove.
The driver looked and nodded knowingly:
"Fifteen dollar a ton I'll get."
I stood and gaped at the fool, amazed,
Who could talk of commercial barter and sale
Of such perfume by the ton!
For rather should the yokel turn perfumer
And press the fragrant timothy into a bottled essence
Such as strong men buy for gentle women
At five dollars an ounce.
Lovers might then linger longer near their sweets,
Reminded by the perfume of wholesome meadows
Or—Tess of the D'Urbervilles.

INDECISION

I've half a mind to ask you down the lane,
A star-whirled way where kisses may be had
In dream-touched turnings shadowed by a vine,
And safe from neighbors with their windows up—
Yes, I've half a mind to ask you down the lane,
And yet the other half . . .
Is full of her who walked there yesteryear.

I LOST MY PIPE IN MAY

I cannot call the echoes back
That thrilled the upland way;
The songs I made, ah! where's the knack—
I lost my pipe in May.

A maid flashed golden, like the sun,
A year ago to-day.
She laughed, the music dared me run—
I threw my pipe away.

YOUNG ROMANCE SOUGHT ADVENTURE

Young Romance sought Adventure
In a glittering café;
And he was brave and found her, too,
And there was much to say,
And cool, red wine and redder lips
When words had gone their way.

Young Romance held her in his arms,
And she was Passion, lo!
With bursting dawn the mask of dreams
Fell off and left her so
Grotesque and dull and hollow-eyed—
And Romance turned to go.

Young Romance saw the vision rent,
As ever Romance must,
That Passion, stripped of purple lights,
Is close to Death as dust—
Without the vibrant touch of love
Another name for Lust.

A LITTLE WHILE MY HEART CAN SING

A little while my heart can sing
And then its beats be heard no more
A little life of carolling
And then my days of song are o'er.

Men's tongues do not forever speak,
A little while my heart can sing
And then I, too, some bourne must seek,
While from another song will spring.

To life, the love of song I bring,
For life is all too brief a span;
A little while my heart can sing
The heart within a happy man.

You hear me now, but when I'm dead
Who then will hear? The echoing
Of my small song will be unsaid.
A little while my heart can sing.

THE HIDDEN ROAD

Do you look for a lane that is longer
Than boulevard, avenue, street,
A way that is made for the stronger,
A path for wandering feet?

Then listen! I know of a highway
That turns into tracks little known,
The spot for a vagabond's by-way,
To claim all the world for your own.

A riband where colors are lighter—
Meandering, mystical moon;
And the stars are all winking the brighter
With jewels for nights in June.

Where music and laughter are flying,
And each has a poem to give,
And one never gossips of dying,
Because of the joy that you live.

And it's oh! for a wind that is blowing
And touching your cheek with a kiss,
A song that is rising and flowing,
And it's there you will find all this.

But I can't put your feet on the by-way;
I can only beseech you to start,
For the road is called Happiness Highway
And it ends and begins in your heart.

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